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You can't kid a kidder - Elie Weisel (A Good Fools')

SHINING TIME STATION

"YOU CAN'T KID A KIDDER"

BY

ELLIS WEINER

FIRST DRAFT  
JULY 31, 1992

SCENE 1  
(FADE IN)

(MAINSET)

(MORNING. STACY IS OPENING FOR BUSINESS. A CALENDAR SITS ON DESK, SHOWING MARCH 30; SHE TEARS IT OFF, CRUMPLES AND DISCARDS IT, REVEALING MARCH 31. SHE BUSIES HERSELF WITH DESK WORK FOR A BEAT, THEN THE PHONE RINGS. SHE ANSWERS)

STACY:

Shining Time  
Station... Good morning,  
Mr. King... No, Schemer  
isn't in yet... the lease  
for his arcade? I think  
there's a copy in the  
files... yes, and we'll  
see you later... You're  
welcome.

*you need to renew  
today?*

(SHE HANGS UP AND CROSSED TO BILLY'S OFFICE, ENTERS. A BEAT OF SILENCE. THEN DAN, KARA AND BECKY ENTER FROM PLATFORM IN MID-CONVERSATION)

DAN:

I'm telling you, we're in  
big trouble tomorrow.  
April Fool's day is  
Schemer's favorite day.

KARA:

What will he do?

DAN:

Go totally crazy with  
practical jokes.  
Squirters and buzzers and  
trick gum and whoopee  
cushions --

BECKY:

Yeah, but are you sure  
April Fool's Day is  
tomorrow?

(DAN LEADS THEM OVER TO DESK AND  
POINTS TO CALENDAR)

Oh, right.

KARA:

Maybe we should stay  
away.

DAN:

Or...

(HE THINKS, FLIPPING CALENDAR  
PAGES)

BECKY:

Or what?

DAN:

Suppose we tore this off.  
Schemer would think today  
is April Fool's Day.

BECKY:

He'd go around saying,  
April Fool! April Fool!

KARA:

And everybody would look  
at him and say, Huh?

(THEY LAUGH FOR A MOMENT -- THEN, A  
THOUGHTFUL SILENCE)

BECKY:

Can we do that?

KARA:

I don't know...

(THEY FREEZE AS THEY HEAR, FROM  
PLATFORM--)

Calendar needs to be

*(big)*

SCENE 1 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

(OS)

(SINGING, SWINGING)

"I...do...  
Something to me.  
Something that simply  
misti-fiiiiies...me..."

(THE KIDS LOOK AT EACH OTHER. DAN HOLDS OUT CALENDAR, BECKY TEARS OFF SHEET AND HANDS IT TO KARA, WHO SHOVES IT INTO HER POCKET. ALL THEN RUN TO TICKET BOOTH, WHERE THEY LOOK ELABORATELY INNOCENT.  
SCHEMER ENTERS)

SCHEMER:

"Tell me...why should it be...I have the power to hyponotiiiiize me..."  
Children. Dan and Becky and Kara. How are we today?

(THEY AD LIB MUMBLES, SHRUGS -- "OKAY," FINE," ETC. SCHEMER STROLLS TOWARD STACY'S DESK, UNDER--)

"Fine"? "Okay"? Not good enough! Where's your youthful zest? I want to hear, "Schemer, you biz-whiz, you, we feel FANTAS--"

(HE STOPS, HIS ATTENTION RIVETED ON THE CALENDAR. HE'S TERRIFIED)

Wait a minute. What's that.

DAN:

What's what, Schemer?

KARA:

It's a calendar.

SCENE 1 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

Exactly.

(TO HIMSELF, TENSE)

It says April the first.

(HYSTERICAL)

APRIL FOOL'S DAY! TODAY!  
NOW!

(CALM, CONTROLLED)

Okay. So I lost track of time. I'm a happy-go-lucky guy. These things happen.

(HYSTERICAL)

Everybody'll be out to get me! Everything they say, everything they do -- it'll all be an attempt to fool Schemer!

(COLLECTS HIMSELF)

So be it. Let them. As of this moment, I am ready. It's fool or be fooled, and I certainly will.

(STACY ENTERS FROM BILLY'S OFFICE  
CARRYING SCHEMER'S LEASE)

STACY:

Oh, Schemer. Just the man I wanted to see --

SCHEMER:

No no no NO, Miss Jones. Don't even think about it.

STACY:

Don't think about what?

SCENE 1 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

Is that how we're playing it? Miss Innocence?

STACY:

I just want you to look at this. It's your lease--

SCHEMER:

Oh is it now? Come come, Miss Jones. The old flash-paper lease trick? I touch it and it bursts into flames?

STACY:

What are you talking about?

SCHEMER:

Schemer Rule Number One, Miss Jones: You can't kid a kidder.

(STACY WATCHES, DUMFOUNDED, AS SCHEMER MOVES WARILY THROUGH STATION: SNEAKS UP ON TICKET BOOTH AND SUDDENLY LUNGES IN, LOOKING FOR DANGER; GOES TO DESK, AND POUNCES ON PHONE, CHECKING IT FOR HIDDEN BUGS; SIDLES OVER TO BILLY'S OFFICE AND PEEKS IN WARILY)

Yes, everything looks completely normal... and that's exactly what worries me -- AH HA!

(HE SUDDENLY STARES UP AT THE CEILING, HANDS OUT, POISED, READY FOR ANYTHING. BEAT. NOTHING HAPPENS)

STACY:

Have you been under stress --

The old fly paper lease trick? I touch it and it sticks to my hands like glue?

SCENE 1 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

What was that?! Somebody just said "You're under arrest!"

STACY:

Schemer, I don't know what you're up to, but I'd like you to look at this --

SCHEMER:

I'm sure you would, Miss Jones. But not just yet.

(HE SKULKS WARILY TOWARD PLATFORM)

STACY:

Then when?

(HE STOPS, TURNS TO HER, MAKES HIS GRAND STATEMENT)

SCHEMER:

When I'm prepared. When I've got my equipment and my stuff. When I am well-armed and strategically ready to face whatever this day holds in store. Because let me assure you, Miss Jones: When I come back, I shall return.

(Gen mætter hø)

(HE EXITS. STACY IS BAFFLED)

STACY:

He is certainly acting strangely. Even for him.

(THE KIDS GIGGLE AMONG THEMSELVES)

(DISSOLVE TO:)

SCENE 2

(INT. ARCADE)

(LATER. SCHEMER IS BEDECKED WITH PRACTICAL JOKES: SQUIRTING FLOWER, JOY BUZZER, TRICK PEN IN HIS POCKET, WEIRD HAT, ETC. HE ROOTS AROUND IN A BIG VALISE AND PULLS OUT EACH ITEM AS HE TAKES INVENTORY)

✓

SCHEMER:

Itch powder... snapping gum... whoopee cushion... black-eye telescope... dribble glass... -- and all of it state-of-the-art.

(HE TAKES OUT CHATTERING TEETH, SETS THEM ON COUNTER. TALKS TO THEM)

What are you grinning at? I know -- you admire me. Hey, why not. Like the man said, on April Fool's Day, you can fool all the people all of the time, all day, every day, for one day only. But you can't fool me. I'm ready.

(BILLY LEAVES HIS OFFICE AND CROSSES TO THE ARCADE)

BILLY:

Nice day, huh, Schemer?

SCHEMER:

Oh, perhaps...

(BILLY GOES TO JUKEBOX AS SCHEMER EYES HIM SUSPICIOUSLY. BILLY TAKES OUT NICKEL, IS ABOUT TO INSERT IT, WHEN SCHEMER STOPS HIM.)

Billy? Mind if I ask what you're doing?

Well I'll just see how nice it is now, won't we?

SCENE 2 (CONT'D)

BILLY:

I had a desire to hear some music. So I'm putting a nickel in the juke box.

SCHEMER:

And it just happens to be today, doesn't it?

BILLY:

Beg pardon?

SCHEMER:

Billy, let's put our cards on the table, shall we? I know what's going on, and you know what's going on. And now you know that I know that you know that I know what's going on.

BILLY:

But what's going on?

SCHEMER:

As if you didn't know! Billy, it should be obvious by now that I know the score. And the score is, Schemer one, Billy nothing. The jukebox is closed.

BILLY:

(SHRUGS)

Suit yourself.

(BILLY STARTS TO WALK OFF. SCHEMER HAS A GREAT IDEA, DASHES FORWARD TO BLOCK HIM, AND OFFERS UP THE SNAPPING GUM)

SCENE 2 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

But that doesn't mean we  
can't still be friends.  
have a stick of perfectly  
ordinary gum.

BILLY:

Sure.

(BILLY TAKES ONE -- A REAL ONE --  
UNWRAPS IT, PUTS IN MOUTH)

Spearmint. Thanks.

(HE WALKS OFF. SCHEMER IS PUZZLED.  
LOOKS AT THE PACK. TAKES ONE  
HIMSELF -- WHICH CAUSES THE METAL  
BAND TO SNAP HIM ON THE FINGER. HE  
WRITHES, TRIES TO STIFLE HIS MOANS,  
AND FINALLY RUNS OUT THE PLATFORM  
EXIT, SCREAMING IN PAIN)

(CUT TO:)

SCENE 3  
(INT. JUKEBOX)

(THE PUPPETS ARE DISGRUNTLED)

DIDI:

Can you believe Schemer?  
He thinks today's April  
Fool's Day just because  
the kids changed the  
calendar.

TITO:

And because he's out to  
trick everyone, he thinks  
everyone is out to trick  
him.

DIDI:

So we don't get to play  
Billy's song.

REX:

Maybe one of us ought to  
tell him he's making a  
mistake, Tex.

*Schemer*

TEX:

Go right ahead, Rex.

(BEAT -- THEY ALL LOOK AT EACH  
OTHER)

ALL:

Naaaahh!

(CUT TO:)

SCENE 4  
(ARCADE)

(DAY. THE KIDS ARE LOOKING AT SCHEMER'S BAG OF TRICKS, DEBATING ON WHETHER TO OPEN IT)

DAN:

Come on. We don't have to touch anything. We'll just look.

BECKY:

It's not ours, Dan.

KARA:

But there's so much neat stuff in there.

(MR. C. APPEARS. THE CHATTERING TEETH, WHICH HE DOESN'T SEE, ARE RIGHT BEHIND HIM)

MR. C:

Ah, the irresistible appeal of neat stuff.

DAN:

Mr. Conductor, can't we just take a peak?

MR. C:

Maybe if he had left the bag open. But if the case is closed, the case is closed.

*suitcase*

(OFF DAN'S DISMAY)

On the other hand, if I know Schemer, sooner or later you'll get a chance to see all this neat stuff in action.

SCENE 4 (CONT'D)

(AS HE SAYS THIS, HE CASUALLY LEANS BACK WITH ONE ARM OUTSTRETCHED, EXPECTING TO PROP HIMSELF AGAINST THE WALL. BUT HIS HAND LANDS AGAINST THE TEETH. THEY START CHATTERING. THE VIBRATION SHAKES HIM OFF, AND THE TEETH START MOVING TOWARD HIM)

BECKY:

Look out! Here come the teeth!

(MR C. RUNS -- AND QUICKLY ARRIVES AT THE EDGE OF THE COUNTER. THERE'S NO WHERE ELSE TO GO. HE JUMPS -- AND LANDS ON A CHAIR, ON TOP OF A WHOOPEE CUSHION, WHICH MAKES THE INEVITABLE NOISES. THE KIDS RUSH OVER IN CONCERN. HE GETS UP AND COLLECTS HIMSELF)

KARA:

Are you all right?

MR. C:

That was close! I was almost chattered to death. But why is Schemer using all these tricks today? I thought tomorrow is April first.

DAN:

It is. But we fooled him. We tore off today's page on the calendar, so he thinks today is tomorrow.

SCENE 4 (CONT'D)

MR. C:

Did you tell Billy and  
Stacy?

(THE KIDS ALL SHAKE THEIR HEADS  
"NO." MR. C. BURSTS OUT LAUGHING)

So he thinks they're out  
to trick him, and they  
think he's even crazier  
than usual!

(SIMMERS DOWN)

A good laugh -- you know,  
isn't laughter strange?  
It's so much fun, but  
it's really not that much  
different from coughing,  
is it? Which is no fun  
at all.

BECKY:

I hate coughing.

KARA:

Sneezing's kind of fun.

DAN:

Hiccups are okay, too.  
As long as you don't have  
to do it for the rest of  
your life.

SCENE 4 (CONT'D)

MR. C:

The thing about laughing is, you can make people do it just by talking to them. Of course, it's important to know when, where, and how. When it comes to telling jokes, some times are definitely better than others. Speaking of which --

(LOOKS AT WATCH)

-- if you want to see something really funny, take a look down the Anything Tunnel.

(AS THEY TURN TO RUN)

Not yet!

(LOOKS AT WATCH)

Okay. Now.

(THEY RUN TO THE TUNNEL AS WE PAN TO: )

SCENE 5

(ANYTHING TUNNEL -- PICTURE MACHINE  
SONG - ? -)

(CUT TO)

SCENE 6  
(MAINSET)

(A BIT LATER. SCHEMER ENTERS,  
SHIFTY AND CAUTIOUS. SUDDENLY  
OVER AT THE ARCADE, HE SEES--

GINNY, TRANSFERRING TOMATOES FROM  
A LARGE BAG TO A SMALLER ONE.

HE APPROACHES HER)

SCHEMER:

Hello, Ginny. I don't  
suppose you'd care to  
tell me what you're  
really doing.

GINNY:

(KEEPS WORKING)

Just what it looks like,  
Schemer.

SCHEMER:

In other words, putting  
together some kind of  
bogus exploding vegetable  
gag, eh? Not bad.

GINNY:

They're tomatoes. I'm  
putting together a bag  
for Stacy.

SCHEMER:

Real tomatoes? Puh-  
leeze. Don't make me  
laugh.

(HE TRIGGERS A LAUGHING-VOICE  
DEVICE IN HIS POCKET, WHICH GOES  
"HA HA HA" AS GINNY GETS INSULTED)

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

GINNY:

Of course they're real,  
Schemer. Don't you dare  
accuse me of being as  
sneaky as you are. And  
tell your clothes to stop  
laughing at me.

SCHEMER:

Ginny. Darling. This  
fake tomato bit is the  
oldest trick in the book.  
Shall we get it over  
with?

(TAKES A TOMATO)

One, two, three -- voila!

(HE SLAMS THE [REAL] TOMATO ON THE  
TOP OF HIS HEAD -- IT BUST AND  
DRIPS ALL OVER HIM)

GINNY:

You deliberately wasted  
a good tomato! Get out  
of here. Go pick on  
somebody else's  
groceries.

SCHEMER:

Me? What about you! You  
smuggled a real tomato in  
there on purpose!

(FAKE-GRACIOUS)

But I forgive you. Let's  
shake and make up.

GINNY:

Well... okay.

(THEY SHAKE)

And get rid of that ring.  
It's awful.

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

(SHE TAKES THE BAGS AND CROSSES TO STACY AT THE MAIN DESK. SCHEMER FROWNS, LOOKS AT BUZZER ON HIS HAND. HE FIDDLING WITH IT)

SCHEMER:

It's not a ring. It's --

(HE HOLDS IT UP TO HIS EAR. IT GOES OFF WITH A LOUD BUZZ. HE RECOILS AND STAGGERS AROUND)

(AT MAIN DESK -- GINNY HANDS OVER THE SMALL BAG)

GINNY:

Here's <sup>the</sup> your tomatoes, Stacy. And speaking of tomatoes, watch out for Schemer today. He's absolutely bananas.

✓

(NEARBY, THE KIDS GIGGLE AMONG THEMSELVES. STACY NOTICES. THINKS, THEN MOTIONS TO THEM TO ACCOMPANY HER. GINNY, ALERT TO SOMETHING JUICY, SCURRIES AFTER)

(AT ARCADE, SCHEMER IS LUSTILY PAINTING A STRIPE OF MYSTERIOUS STICKY GOO ACROSS THE ENTRANCE. STACY ARRIVES AND WATCHES, WITH KIDS AND GINNY IN BACKGROUND)

SCHEMER:

(SINGS TO HIMSELF; TO "APRIL IN PARIS")

"April the First in  
Shining Time Station  
Congratulations  
To-hoo-hoo MEEEE--"

STACY:

Schemer --

(SCHEMER IS STARTLED; HE JUMPS, YELLS, ASSUMES A CRAZED SERIES OF PSEUDO-MARTIAL ARTS STANCES, UNDER--)

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

I'm ready! Do your  
worst!

STACY:

That doesn't look like  
paint to me.

SCHEMER:

Oh, Miss Jones. You  
almost startled me. And  
no, it isn't paint. I'm  
laying down a line of  
super-sticky space-age  
goo. So that people who  
enter the Arcade will  
find their well-shod  
tootsies stuck smack to  
the linoleum. Funny?  
Just thinking of it makes  
me laugh. Watch.

(HE STRIKES A POSE OF  
CONCENTRATION, THEN TRIGGERS THE  
LAUGH BOX)

STACY:

Schemer, you can't play  
pranks like that on our  
customers like this.

✓

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

I am not "playing pranks."  
I'm defending myself.  
The world is crawling  
with jokers and  
tricksters out to get me,  
Miss Jones. I intend to  
get them first.

(FAKE-GRACIOUS)

But let's not talk about  
me. Let's talk about  
you. ~~Miss Jones...~~  
~~Stacy...~~ you're a woman  
of impeccable taste.  
Might I maybe interest  
you in some --

(PRODUCES BOTTLE FROM JACKET  
POCKET)

-- sophisticated,  
fabulous perfume?

(HE UNCAPS BOTTLE, WAVES IT AROUND,  
BECKONS TO STACY)

Come closer. Experience  
the magic and the  
mystery.

STACY:

No, thanks, Schemer.

SCHEMER:

Oh, don't thank me yet.  
Let me bestow on you the  
delightful and  
unforgettable essence of  
wonderful glorious --

(HE MANAGES TO SQUIRT IT ON  
HIMSELF: A BLACK, SMELLY LIQUID)

*Stacy, Miss Jones,*

*Perfume bottle  
with large rubber squeeze  
bulb*

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

STACY:

Schemer, I don't know what this is all about, but I'm going to discuss it with Billy. And if we have to call your mother to straighten you out, we will.

(SHE STORMS OFF TO BILLY'S OFFICE, THE OTHERS BEHIND. [THE KIDS LAUGHING.] SCHEMER CALLS AFTER HER)

SCHEMER:

Go ahead! My mommy knows what day it is. Unlike some people.

(HE TRIGGERS THE LAUGH BOX AND LIP-SYNCHS THE LAUGH, AS WE --)

(CUT TO:)

SCENE 7  
(WORKSHOP)

(A BIT LATER. BILLY LISTENS DEADPAN, SEATED AT DESK, AS STACY, GINNY AND THE KIDS GATHER ROUND AND STACY FINISHES HER REPORT)

STACY:

He's booby-trapping how own Arcade! Maybe he's sick with fever.

✓

(THE KIDS LAUGH)

GINNY:

Sick my eye. I say he's just finally gone wacko.

(THE KIDS LAUGH HARDER. BILLY LOOKS QUIZZICALLY AT THEM, RISES, GOES TO DOOR, LOOKS OUT)

BILLY:

Seems to me he's expecting something to happen. Today's not his birthday, is it?

(THE KIDS REALLY CRACK UP AT THIS. THE ADULTS TURN TO THEM, SUSPICIOUS)

STACY:

Wait a minute. Do you three know anything about this?

(KIDS SHUFFLE, LOOK AT EACH OTHER, STALL)

BILLY:

Let's have it. We can't run the station with Schemer acting so strangely.

✓

DAN:

He thinks today is April Fool's Day.

SCENE 7 (CONT'D)

KARA:

So he's trying to trick everyone else before they trick him.

STACY:

But why would he think that? April Fool's Day isn't until tomorrow.

BECKY:

We tore today's date off your calendar.

(THE ADULTS ALL LOOK AT EACH OTHER.  
COMPREHENSION DAWNS)

GINNY:

Well shut my mouth and paint me purple.

STACY:

That's not very nice, kids.

DAN:

We never actually said it was April first.

KARA:

If he had asked us, we would have told the truth.

BECKY:

Besides, nobody's played tricks on him. He's doing all this crazy stuff himself.

BILLY:

And he's about to do it again.

SCENE 8  
(ARCADE)

(FELIX IS AT THE JUKEBOX,  
DIGGING FOR A NICKEL. JUST AS HE'S  
ABOUT TO INSERT IT, SCHEMER APPEARS  
AND PLUCKS IT FROM HIS HAND)

SCHEMER:

Felix? Please.

FELIX:

Hey! What's the idea,  
Schemer?

SCHEMER:

Money patrol. Weeding  
out bogus, fake-o money  
like this.

(TOSSES IT OVER HIS SHOULDER)

Face it, pal. You are  
dealing with a master.

FELIX:

Are you feeling all  
right?

There's nothing wrong  
with that master.

SCENE 8 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

Never better. What's my secret? Simple. I take the time to stop and smell the roses. Or the petunias, the begonias, whatever this is. Care to join me?

(HE GESTURES TOWARD SQUIRT-FLOWER ON HIS LAPEL, AIMS IT AT FELIX, AND FIRES -- RIGHT INTO SCHEMER'S EYE. HE STAGGERS, REELS AROUND.

I'm all right. Everybody relax!

(HE STUMBLES AROUND UNTIL HIS FEET LAND IN THE STRIPE OF GOO ACROSS THE ARCADE ENTRANCE. HE'S STUCK --STRUGGLES, BUT CAN'T MOVE.

They've got me! They've got me!

(STACY, BILLY, GINNY AND THE KIDS RUSH OUT OF BILLY'S OFFICE AND CLUSTER AROUND HIM AS DOES FELIX. SCHEMER STOPS, REGARDS THEM)

So, it's come to this. I might have known.

BILLY:

Known what, Schemer.

SCHEMER:

That all of you were working together. Secretly, fiendishly -- to trick me into stepping into my own goo. Well, it won't work.

(STRUGGLES, STAYS STUCK)

Okay. it will work. But that's it! From now on, I'm wise to all of you.

SCENE 8 (CONT'D)

STACY:

Look, this has all been a  
big misunderstanding.  
The calendar --

SCHEMER:

Calendars don't lie. Or  
I suppose one of you is  
going to say, "Schemer,  
today isn't really April  
Fool's Day."

GINNY:

Schemer, as a matter of  
fact, today isn't really  
April Fool's Day.

SCHEMER:

I rest my case!

BILLY:

The kid's tore off  
today's date. April  
first is tomorrow.

SCHEMER:

Of course you're going to  
say that. It's all part  
of the trick. Well guess  
what I've got?

(PRODUCES BOTTLE FROM JACKET  
POCKET)

Ta-daa! Wait'll you hear  
what this is!

DAN:

What is it?

SCHEMER:

(SUDDENLY PARANOID)

Why should I tell you?

SCENE 8 (CONT'D)

BILLY:

Fine. Meanwhile --

(TO FELIX)

-- let's get him loose.

(THE TWO TAKE SCHEMER'S ARMS AND TRY TO LIFT HIM OFF THE GOO. SCHEMER RESISTS)

SCHEMER:

I'm warning you! I have a sprinkle can and I'm not afraid to use it!

(HE BRANDISHES THE BOTTLE AT THEM, AND COCKS IT BACK TO SPRINKLE IT AT THE OTHERS. BUT THE TOP FLIES OFF, AND THE WHOLE CAN OF POWDER FLIES BACK ONTO SCHEMER. HE DROPS THE CAN IN PANIC)

Ahh! No! I'm a dead man!

*Sh... a gun! I'm history!*

KARA:

Why? What is that stuff?

STACY:

(PICKS UP CAN, READS)

Itching powder.

(SFX: TRAIN ARRIVES)

(SCHEMER STARTS A WILDLY GYRATING ITCH-DANCE, IN PLACE AND STILL STUCK TO THE FLOOR. HE SCRATCHES, WRITHES AS THE OTHERS STARE)

STACY:

Is there anything we can do?

SCHEMER:

Scratch here! And here!  
And down there! Oh,  
never mind!

SCENE 8 (CONTD)

(STILL SCRATCHING, HE STARTS TO REMOVE PIECES OF CLOTHING, FLINGING THEM AWAY, PAUSING FOR A SECOND AS THOUGHT THAT DID THE TRICK, THEN LAUNCHING BACK INTO A FRENZY OF SCRATCHING. HE DROPS HIS TROUSERS, REVEALING HIS <sup>LONG</sup> JOHN'S, AND SCRATCHES HIS LEGS)

✓  
wore a polka dotted ?

(ANGLE ON PLATFORM ENTRANCE: J.B. KING ARRIVES, NO-NONSENSE AND DRESSED FOR BUSINESS. CARRIES A SATCHEL)

long bushy hair

(STACY SEES HIM, RUSHES OVER TO INTERCEPT HIM)

STACY:

Mr. King, Schemer hasn't, uh, had a chance to look over his old lease yet.

KING:

Quite all right, Miss Jones. We'll go over it together.

STACY:

But he's...kind of stuck on a problem right now--

KING:

If he wants to stay on with his Arcade, he'll see me.

immediately

(KING SPIES SCHEMER, JOINS HIM AND THE OTHERS. STACY FOLLOWS)

Look here, Schemer --

SCHEMER:

Mr.

Well, <sup>^</sup>J.B. King. So you're in on this, too?

SCENE 8 (CONT'D)

KING:

I'm not in on anything.

*But I'm afraid you're in on something - King, I mean.*  
(DIGS IN SATCHEL)

It's about your lease.  
It's expired. If you  
want to keep running the  
Arcade, you have to sign  
a new one. Here.

(HE PRODUCES A THREE-FOOT LONG  
DOCUMENT, THRUSTS IT AT SCHEMER)

Read it carefully and  
sign on the dotted line.

(SCHEMER CANS THE LEASE QUICKLY,  
CHUCKLING)

SCHEMER:

You people must think I  
was born yesterday. Did  
you actually believe I  
would sign this phony-  
baloney piece of  
gobbledygook?

BILLY:

Schemer, you're making a  
mistake.

SCHEMER:

Oh no! Shame on me! We  
can't have that, can we?  
I'd better sign right  
away.

(TAKES PEN FROM POCKET)

How do you spell "Abraham  
Lincoln"?

KING:

Is this some kind of  
joke?

SCENE 8 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

No, but this is!

(HE LIFTS THE FILLER LEVER: INK SHOOTS OUT ALL OVER KING. THE OTHERS GASP AND RECOIL AS KING SPUTTERS. SCHEMER TAKES OUT THE LAUGH BOX AND HOLDS IT OUT AS IT LAUGHS. KING FINALLY COLLECTS HIMSELF, GRABS IT, THROWS IT TO THE FLOOR)

KING:

Are you going to sign this, or do I get myself a new tenant?

SCHEMER:

Let me put it this way,  
Mr. J.B. King..

(SCHEMER HOLDS UP THE LEASE, THEN METHODICALLY TEARS IT INTO A HUNDRED PIECES AND TOSSES THEM INTO THE AIR. KING SNARLS, TURNS, AND STORMS OUT. STACY AND BILLY TRADE LOOKS AND FOLLOW HIM)

STACY:

Mr. King, wait! He's just kidding!

(THE KIDS LOOK AT EACH OTHER -- SCARED -- AND FOLLOW. GINNY SNORTS AND GOES, TOO. SCHEMER MANAGES TO TURN [IN PLACE] AND CALL AFTER THEM)

SCHEMER:

A-PRIL FOOL! HA HA! I guess you know what kind of man you're dealing with now.

(CUT TO:)

SCENE 9  
(INT. JUKEBOX)

(THE PUPPETS ARE DISGUSTED)

TITO:

You know, just when I  
start to feel sorry for  
Schemer, he goes too far.

DIDI:

Yeah. They tried to tell  
him the truth, but he  
wouldn't listen.

TEX:

I think we ought to play  
a song, Rex.

REX:

Just like that, Tex?  
Without a nickel or  
anything?

DIDI:

Great idea, boys!  
That'll drive him crazy!

TITO:

Let's do (title). And  
let's groove it good,  
people!

(MUSIC: "THIS OLD MAN")

(CUT TO:)

SCENE 10  
(ARCADE)

(SCHEMER HEARS THE SONG, IS DISTRESSED)

SCHEMER:

Hey. That's impossible.  
The jukebox is playing  
without any money. Who  
ever heard of free music?  
I gotta turn that off...

(HE STRUGGLES TO REACH JUKE BOX,  
BUT REMAINS STUCK)

(INTERCUT PUPPETS AND SCHEMER UNTIL  
SONG ENDS)

(DISSOLVE TO:)

SCENE 11  
(MAINSET)

(SOME TIME LATER. SCHEMER'S SHOES ARE EMPTY, STILL STUCK TO THE FLOOR. THE ARCADE IS A MESS. DAN, BECKY, AND KARA ARE MOPING AROUND THE MURAL SIGNAL HOUSE)

DAN:

I can't believe such a little trick could make such a big mess.

BECKY:

I feel like it's not really our fault, but...

KARA:

But it's our fault anyway. Me, too.

(THEY SIGH -- AS MR. C. APPEARS, DRESSED IN POLO ATTIRE)

MR. C:

Take it from me: polo is a good game, but riding on catback isn't as easy as it looks.

DAN:

*squirmed  
chaperone back*

*They keep getting distracted by... (unclear)*

(LACKLUSTER)

Hi, Mr. Conductor.

MR. C:

Gee, I must have the wrong location. Is this Shining Time Station, or the World Headquarters of the I.M.S.?

(OFF THEIR LOOK)

The International Mopey Society.

SCENE 11 (CONT'D)

KARA:

Our trick on Schemer sort  
of got of hand.

MR. C:

Things with Schemer  
usually do. What  
happened?

BECKY:

He made Mr. King mad and  
might not be able to keep  
the Arcade.

MR. C:

Ouch! He still thought  
it was April Fool's Day,  
eh?

(THEY NOD)

Well, Mr. King is an  
intelligent man. He  
knows that people  
sometimes make mistakes  
-- even railroad people.  
Remember that mixup with  
Gordon and Edward?

ALL KIDS:

No.

MR. C:

Well, you will once I  
tell you about it...

(DISSOLVE TO:)

SCENE 12

(TTE: "WRONG ROAD")

(DISSOLVE TO:)

SCENE 13  
(MAINSET)

BECKY:

That wasn't Gordon's fault. His conductor made the mistake.

MR. C:

Right. But Gordon made things worse with his attitude.

SCHEMER:

(OS)

Moving men? Looking for the Arcade? Oh, ha ha. Face it -- you can't fool me.

MR. C:

Speaking of attitude, guess who. Excuse me while I excuse myself.

(MR. C DISAPPEARS)

(ANGLE ON PLATFORM -- SCHEMER ENTERS, DRESSED IN A BARREL [HIS CHANGE-MAKER SECURED TO THE FRONT], AND TIE. HE'S BAREFOOT. HE ENTERS AND GOES TO KIDS)

SCHEMER:

So, my young friends. Any question about who's kidding whom around Shining Time Station?

(KIDS LOOK AT EACH OTHER, AND REACH A DECISION)

KARA:

Schemer, we have something to tell you.

(ANGLE ON PLATFORM -- TWO MOVING MEN [IN UNIFORM] ENTER AND GO TO SCHEMER. ONE WHEELS A DOLLY)

SCENE 13 (CONT'D)

MOVING MAN A:

'Scuse us. You Schemer?  
This the Arcade?

SCHEMER:

Yes and yes. What can I  
do for you gentleman?

MAN A:

*Just stay out of the way.*  
Nothing. *^* Thanks.

(THE MEN CROSS TO THE ARCADE AND  
START TO LOAD A MACHINE ONTO THE  
DOLLY)

SCHEMER:

See that, kids? They've  
come here specifically to  
meet me and play in the  
Arcade. THAT's fame.  
Now, what did you want to  
tell me?

(THE KIDS ARE WATCHING THE MEN LOAD  
MACHINE)

DAN:

Uh... well...

(SCHEMER FOLLOWS THEIR GAZE AND  
SEES. DISTRAUGHT, HE GOES OVER)

SCHEMER:

Hey, what gives? Put  
that back.

MAN A:

Sorry, bub. We got  
orders to empty out this  
whole area.

SCHEMER:

Whose orders?

(MAN A PULLS YELLOW ORDER SHEET  
FROM POCKET, SHOWS SCHEMER)

SCENE 13 (CONT'D)

MAN A:

Mr. J.B. King. You don't have a lease, he's taking back the Arcade.

(SCHEMER LOOKS ANXIOUS FOR A BEAT, THEN CHUCKLES)

SCHEMER:

Oh. I get it. Sure, fellas. Go ahead.

(THE MEN RESUME MOVING THE EQUIPMENT. THEY LOAD A MACHINE ONTO THE DOLLY, WHEEL IT PAST SCHEMER, LIFT IT UP THE STEPS)

DAN:

Schemer --

SCHEMER:

(TO MEN)

Tell J.B. King the joke's on him.

BECKY:

We tricked you.

SCHEMER:

(TO MEN)

And I'll tell you why.

KARA:

You think it's April Fool's Day, but it's not.

(THE MEN WHEEL THE MACHINE OUT TOWARD PLATFORM)

SCENE 13 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

(TOWARD MEN; SHOUTING)

Because they tricked me.  
I think it's April Fool's  
Day, but it's not.

(BEAT; TO KIDS)

You did? I do? It  
isn't?

(BEAT; DISMISSIVE)

Get out. You did not.  
It is so.

(THE MEN RETURN, GO TO THE ARCADE,  
AND START LOADING NEXT MACHINE,  
UNDER --)

BECKY:

We tore today's date off  
of Stacy's calendar.  
April First is really  
tomorrow.

SCHEMER:

(FAKE LAUGHS)

Boy, you almost had me  
there. That's an  
excellent April Fool's  
Joke for three such young  
children as yourselves.

DAN:

Look.

(HE MARCHES TO STACY'S DESK, GETS  
CALENDAR, BRINGS IT BACK. SHOWS  
SCHEMER)

What does it say?  
"Wednesday, April 1."  
Yesterday was Monday,  
right? So what's today?

SCENE 13 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

(AS THOUGH EXPLAINING THE OBVIOUS)

Today? Dan, my lad. If  
yesterday was Monday, then  
today is W--

(CU -- SCHEMER STOPS COLD. THINKS.  
THEN THE AWFUL TRUTH STARTS TO  
DAWN. AFTER A FEW BEATS, HE  
SUDDENLY DASHES MADLY TO THE --)

(ARCADE, AND FLINGS HIMSELF ONTO  
THE MACHINE THE MEN HAVE LOADED  
ONTO THE DOLLY. THEY START TO  
WHEEL IT -- AND HIM -- OUT)

Stop! Please! PLEASE!  
I've been duped!

MAN A:

Sorry, pal. We got  
orders.

SCHEMER:

But today isn't tomorrow!  
TOMORROW is tomorrow!

(AS THEY WHEEL HIM UP THE STEPS  
TOWARD PLATFORM, STACY AND BILLY  
APPEAR FROM OTHER ENTRANCE.  
SCHEMER ADDRESSES THEM)

Call J. B. King! Tell  
him I made a mistake!  
Tell him I didn't know  
today was today!

(SCHEMER AD LIBS HYSTERIA AS THEY  
WHEEL HIM OUT TO PLATFORM)

(THE KIDS RUN UP TO STACY AND  
BILLY)

KARA:

Stacy, we're really  
sorry.

SCENE 13 (CONT'D)

DAN:

We let things go too far.

BECKY:

Will Schemer really lose  
the arcade?

STACY:

I don't think so. We'll  
explain to Mr. King what  
happened. Just so long  
as it doesn't happen  
again, right?

(THE KIDS NOD, AS --)

(MR. C. APPEARS IN JESTER'S MOTLEY)

BILLY:

What do you think, Mr.  
Conductor? Should we go  
to bat for Schemer?

MR. C:

I think so. This wasn't  
entirely his fault. But  
better do it soon. So he  
has time to get ready.  
Like me.

DAN:

Ready for what?

(STACY SUDDENLY BURSTS OUT LAUGHING  
AND CAN'T STOP)

STACY:

For tomorrow! Which  
really is April Fool's  
Day. Schemer will have  
to go through this all  
over again!

SCENE 13 (CONT'D)

(EVERYONE STARTS LAUGHING AS THE MOVING MEN ENTER FROM PLATFORM, SCHEMER DOGGING THEIR EVERY STEP. HE AGAIN TRIES TO PREVENT THEIR MOVING A MACHINE, AND IS DRAGGED OUT PAST THE OTHERS, WHO ARE STILL LAUGHING AS WE:)

(FADE OUT)